

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 HA-05 SY-05 MCT-01 /087 W
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P R 241140Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7534
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 3142

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, SHUM, AF, UR, US
SUBJECT: AN INITIAL ANALYSIS OF THE KHAIBAR KILLING THE
RESULTANT ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATION

REF: A. KABUL 3082; B. KABUL 3019

1. SUMMARY: THE APRIL 19 COMMUNIST PARADE AND ANTI-AMERICAN
DEMONSTRATION, WHICH HAD BEEN SPARKED BY THE APRIL 17 MURDER
OF AN AFGHAN COMMUNIST LEADER, MIGHT POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN SANCTION-
ED IN PART BY THE DAOUD REGIME TO SHOCK THE U.S. AND IRANIAN
GOVERNMENTS INTO A REALIZATION OF THE SERIOUS DOMESTIC POLITICAL
CHALLENGE IT FACES FROM THE PRO-SOVIET LEFT. THIS EVENT HAS
ALSO REVEALED THAT THE COMMUNIST KHALQ PARTY IS AFGHANISTAN'S
LARGEST AND BEST ORGANIZED POLITICAL ORGANIZATION. MEANWHILE,
KABUL IS CALM AND DAOUD STILL VERY MUCH IN CHARGE. END OF
SUMMARY.

2. A WEEK AFTER THE MURDER OF AFGHAN COMMUNIST LEADER MIR
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AKBAR KHAIBAR AND THE RESULTANT COMMUNIST-ORGANIZED PARADE WITH
ITS ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATION (REFTELS), INFORMED AFGHAN
AND DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES AT KABUL ARE STILL WEIGHING THE IMPLICA-
TIONS OF THESE EVENTS, AMONG THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OF THE POST-
1973-COUP ERA. MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS REMAIN, SUCH AS:

A. WHO KILLED KHAIBAR?

B. WHY WAS HE KILLED?

C. WHY DID THE REGIME OF PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD DAOUD PERMIT THE ILLEGAL COMMUNIST KHALQ PARTY TO PARADE PUBLICLY ON THE DAY OF KHAIBAR'S FUNERAL?

D. DID THE REGIME KNOW THAT THAT KHALQ PARADE WOULD FEATURE AN ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE CIA AND "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM"?

E. IF SO, WHY DID THE REGIME DECIDE TO LET THE ANTI-AMERICAN EVENT OCCUR?

F. WHICH SIDE ACCOMPLISHED THE MOST IN POLITICAL IMPACT -- THE KHALQ OR THE GOVERNMENT?

G. WHAT DOES THIS INCIDENT PORTEND FOR THE FUTURE?

3. WHO KILLED KHAIBAR?: AS WAS THE CASE WITH THE OTHER TWO MAJOR POLITICAL MURDERS OF THE PAST YEAR (THE ASSASSINATIONS OF ARIANA PILOT GRAN AND PLANNING MINISTER KHURRAM), THERE IS AN ABUNDANCE OF RUMORS, BUT LITTLE, IF ANY, CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF THE TRUTH. AMONG THE RUMORED PERPETRATORS OF THE CRIME -- TOGETHER WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE MOTIVES, THE EMBASSY WOULD LIST THE FOLLOWING, IN ORDER OF DESCENDING PLAUSIBILITY:

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A. KHAIBAR WAS KILLED BY RIGHTIES EXTREMISTS, SUCH AS THE IKWAN-I-MUSLIM, WHO ARE KNOWN TO HAVE KILLED SOME THREE OR FOUR OTHER AFGHAN LEFTISTS DURING THE PAST YEAR. SOME SUPPORTERS OF THIS THEORY HAVE RECENTLY TOLD US THEY BELIEVE THAT PILOT GRAN MIGHT ACTUALLY HAVE BEEN KILLED IN ERROR BY RIGHTIST GUNMEN LAST AUTUMN BECAUSE HE WAS VERY SIMILAR IN APPEARANCE TO THE NUMBER TWO COMMUNIST KHALQ LEADER, BABRAK KARMAL, WHO LIVED IN THE SAME APARTMENTBUILDING (FROM WHICH HE HURRIEDLY MOVED AFTER THE GRAN KILLING). MANY ADHERENTS OF THIS THEORY BELIEVE THAT A NEW FACET OF THE POST-DAOUD SUCCESSION STRUGGLE, BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT, HAS ALREADY BEGUN.

B. KHAIBAR, WHO WAS THE PARTY'S LEADING IDEOLOGUE AND WHO WAS PERHAPS THE MOST GENUINE COMMUNIST ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE KHALQ, WAS LIQUIDATED BY HIS OWN PARTY COMRADES BECAUSE HE WOULD NOT DESIST FROM CRITICIZING WHAT HE REGARDED AS THE UNSATISFACTORY NATURE OF THE RECENT UNION OF THE PARCHAM AND KHALQ PARTIES -- OR THE DOUBTFUL POLITICAL CREDENTIALS OF SOME OF THE LEADING KHALQUISTS (FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED IN KABUL THAT BABRAK IS A DAOUDIST AGENT POSING AS A TRUE COMMUNIST). THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT ITSELF PROMOTED

THIS THEORY OF KHALQ PARTICIPATION IN THE KILLING IN A RECENT
CONFIDENTIAL BRIEFING TO THE MEMBERS OF THE STILL EMBRYONIC
OFFICIAL PARTY OF THE NATIONAL REVOLUTION. ON APRIL 23, A
HIGH AFGHAN OFFICIAL TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT "KHAIBAR HAD BEEN
THE KHALQ'S SUSLOV -- AND NOW PROBABLY WAS THEIR TROTSKY".

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C. KHAIBAR WAS KILLED AS A RESULT OF A TRADITIONAL
AFGHAN FAMILY FEUD OVER A DISPUTED LAND TRANSACTION. THIS
THEORY, ADVANCED BY A MEMBER OF KHAIBAR'S FAMILY, IS PLAUSI-
BLE IN FEUDAL, VIOLENT AFGHANISTAN.

D. KHAIBAR WAS EXECUTED BY THE DAOUD REGIME IN ORDER TO CUT
THE KHALQ DOWN TO SIZE AND CAST FURTHER SUSPICION ON
RIGHTIST OPPOSITIONISTS.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATION:
THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT, AFTER THE KILLING, THE DAOUD
REGIME DECIDED TO ALLOW A PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF GRIEF AND
INDIGNATION IN ORDER TO RELEASE POLITICAL STEAM, AVOID
A CONFRONTATION IN THE STREETS, AND RELIEVE THE HIGH DEGREE
OF PUBLIC TENSION (KHAIBAR, INCIDENTALLY, WAS WIDELY
REGARDED OUTSIDE COMMUNIST CIRCLES AS A "UINE PERSON"). IN THIS
WAY, THE GOVERNMENT PROBABLY ALSO HOPED TO REDUCE THE
CHANCES OF ITS BEING BLAMED FOR THE KILLING. BY PERMITTING
FREE POLITICAL EXPRESSION BY A NON-LEGAL ORGANIZATION, THE

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AFGHAN GOVERNMENT ADDITIONALLY BURNISHED ITS HUMAN RIGHTS IMAGE. (A SIDE BENEFIT WAS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR GOVERNMENT SECURITY AGENTS TO PHOTOGRAPH KHALQISTS.) WE BELIEVE IT LIKELY THAT SOME TYPE OF AGREEMENT WAS WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE KHALQ AND GOVERNMENT SECURITY OFFICIALS BEFORE THE PARADE, ENSURING AN ORDERLY, WELL-CONTROLLED DEMONSTRATION. BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT AFGHAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS WOULD HAVE FAILED TO KNOW IN ADVANCE ABOUT THE KHALQ'S INTENDED ANTI-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATION -- ESPECIALLY WHEN APPROVING A ROUTE OF MARCH BY THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WHEN A SHORTER ROUTE FROM KHAIBAR'S HOME TO THE FUNERAL MOSQUE WAS AVAILABLE, WE HAVE TO ASSUME THAT THE DAOUD REGIME DID NOT FIND THIS DEMONSTRATION POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE, HAVING PROBABLY BEEN ASSURED THAT THE KHALQ INTENDED NO VIOLENCE -- AND CONFIDENT THAT THE POLICE WOULD CONTROL PUBLIC ORDER IF THINGS STARTED TO GET OUT OF HAND. WHY? WE THINK IRAN'S AMBASSADOR HOSSEIN DAVOUDI MAY HAVE PUT HIS FINGER ON DAOUD'S MOTIVE WHEN HE TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER ON APRIL 22: "HE WANTED TO SEND A MESSAGE TO YOUR BOSS AND OURS." THE AFGHAN LEADERS, TROUBLED BY WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS A DISINTERESTED DRIFT IN AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD AFGHANISTAN, PARTICULARLY THE POSTPONEMENT OF A U.S. VISIT FOR DAOUD AND WHAT APPEARS TO BE A DWINDLING, LESS VISIBLE USAID PROGRAM, MIGHT WELL HAVE WANTED TO SHOCK US INTO REALIZING THE SECURITY THREAT THEY FACE AND FOR WHICH THEY CLAIM THEY NEED HELP. THE SAME THEME WOULD BE USEFUL TO PROMOTE IN TEHRAN ON THE EVE OF THE SHAH'S MAY STATE VISIT -- IN THE HOPE THAT IT MIGHT JOLT A MORE MEANINGFUL LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORT OUT OF IRAN'S COFFERS. WE ARE NOT SUGGESTING THAT DAOUD PLANNED OR ENCOURAGED THIS DEMONSTRATION, BUT, HAVING ACQUIESCED FOR LOCAL POLITICAL PURPOSES, HE MAY HAVE SENSED SOME TANGENTIAL POLITICAL BENEFITS IN REMINDING THE US AND IRANIAN EMBASSIES OF THE ORGANIZED NATURE OF THE LEFT IN AFGHANISTAN.

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5. WHO WON WHAT? DAOUD HAS BEEN ABLE TO DELIVER A SUBTLE MESSAGE TO THE AMERICAN AND IRANIAN LEADERSHIP REGARDING LEFT WING CAPABILITIES IN AFGHAANISTAN. THE KHALQ HAS AT LAST DEMONSTRATED PUBLICLY -- LIKE THE LOCH NESS MONSTER -- THE IMPRESSIVE DIMENSIONS OF ITS ORGANIZATION AND STRENGTH, BUT, IN SO DOING, TIPPED ITS HAND, AND THAT OF ITS SOVIET MENTOR. FOR OUR PART, WE NOW HAVE A CLEARER IDEA OF THE COLLANGES POSED BY PRO-SOVIET FORCES IN THIS COUNTRY. THE 15,000 YOUTHS

WHO WAVED THE COMMUNIST FIST SALUTE AGAINST THE GATES OF OUR
EMBASSY ON APRIL 19 CONSITUTED A SIZABLE PERCENTAGE OF
AFGHANISTAN'S FUTURE ELITE (ALBEIT THAT MANY MEMBERS OF THE
CROWD WERE UNDOUBTEDLY SECRET POLICE AGENTS). FOR THE TIME
BEING KABUL IS ONCE AGAIN CALM; DAOUDL APPEARS VERY MUCH IN
CHARGE; AND RUMORS AND THEORIES ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT
ARE CIRCULATING IN PROFUSION. WE WILL BE CULLING AND REPORTING
NO DOUBT FOR SOME TIME AS THE LONGER TERM REPERCUSSIONS OF THIS
INCIDENT BECOME CLEARER.
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